



AOT in Action

TOURISM WORKS FOR ARIZONA!

Welcome to AOT in Action, your weekly e-newsletter from the Arizona Office of Tourism (AOT).

A Message from the Director:

Good morning.

Last week at the Arizona-Mexico Commission plenary session, Governor Janet Napolitano announced that the Lukeville-Sonoyta Port of Entry (POE) will be expanded. This is great news for the tourism industry and could not have been accomplished without a bi-national, public-private partnership between AOT, the Arizona-Mexico Commission, the Arizona Department of Transportation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), General Services Administration (GSA) and our Mexican counterparts, including Puerto Peñasco Visitors Bureau.

Because of this partnership, traffic lanes through the Lukeville-Sonoyta POE will be increased from three to five lanes to accommodate the growing numbers of travelers and to allow for easier flow of traffic between Arizona and Mexico.

For more information, please read the ***AOT News Flash*** section below.

Have a great week.

Margie A. Emmermann
Director
Arizona Office of Tourism

AOT News Flash

Governor Announces Plan for Faster Travel to/from Rocky Point

Last week, Governor Janet Napolitano announced that the Lukeville-Sonoyta Port of Entry (POE), the popular gateway to Rocky Point for Arizonans, will be expanded to accommodate the growing number of travelers. The port was built more than 20 years ago and is not large enough to handle the amount of visitors who travel to Puerto Peñasco (Rocky Point) and return to Arizona on holidays and weekends.

The Lukeville POE Master Planning Committee was formed after the 2007 Summer Plenary to find solutions to the congestion at the Lukeville POE. This binational public-private partnership between Arizona and Mexico was developed by the Tourism Committee and Transportation, Infrastructure and Ports Committee of the Arizona-Mexico Commission (AMC). The Committees worked for more than a year to facilitate the flow of traffic for visitors and widen the Lukeville-Sonoyta POE.

The current POE will be expanding from three lanes to five lanes; reducing the wait from five hours to three hours during peak times. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) has agreed to staff the port once it is expanded. The expansion is estimated to cost \$2.5 million, which has already been secured through public and private sector agreements. Enhancement work is anticipated to take less than 12 months.

The Arizona Office of Tourism, the Arizona-Mexico Commission, the Arizona Department of Transportation, U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), General Services Administration (GSA) and their Mexican counterparts, including Puerto Peñasco Visitors Bureau, worked in partnership on this agreement. For more information, please contact Laura French at 602-3720 or via e-mail at lfrench@azot.gov.

Complimentary ATU Workshop Set for December

The Arizona Office of Tourism is proud to present Arizona Tourism University's complimentary workshop, "Leveraging and Linking Grant Funds."

This workshop is a guide to writing successful grant applications and effectively managing the grant process. Experts will provide insight into funding, application and review procedures, as well as general tips on preparing competitive proposals. Information will also be provided on a variety of grant funding and support sources.

To register for these complimentary workshops, please contact Meghan Dorn at mdorn@azot.gov or 602-364-3708.

The "Leveraging and Linking Grant Funds" Workshops will be held from **9 a.m. to Noon** in the following locations:

Tuesday, December 9

[Globe-Miami Regional Chamber of Commerce](#)

1360 North Broad Street
Globe, AZ 85501

Thursday, December 11

[La Posada Hotel](#)

303 E. 2nd Street (Route 66)
Winslow, AZ 86047

Neither of these dates work with your schedule? Then take advantage of our new online opportunity!

This year, AOT is proud to introduce **ATU On-Line**. We will be offering all of our workshops over the Internet in the form of a Webinar. These condensed versions will offer the same great information as the workshops.

The online class is from 1 to 4 p.m. on **Friday, December 12**. To register for the class contact Meghan Dorn at mdorn@azot.gov.

AOT Staff Member Receives Honor in Procurement Profession

AOT congratulates Mary-Ellen Kane, Procurement Manager for the Arizona Office of Tourism, for successfully completing the **Certified Professional Public Buyer (CPPB)** exam, administered by the Universal Public Purchasing Certification Council (UPPCC). This national recognition certifies her high standards of proficiency in public procurement and is considered a hard-earned honor in the procurement profession.

AOT Introduces 2009 Professional Travel Planner's Guide

AOT's Trade and Media Relations Division is pleased to announce that the 2009 Professional Travel Planner's Guide (PTPG) has been published and is now available for distribution. PTPG is the official fulfillment publication for AOT's Trade and Media Relations Division. This 120-page comprehensive statewide guide assists tour operators and travel agents in the United States and in key international countries as they create group and individual tour packages throughout Arizona.

PTPG includes extensive itineraries, maps, events, motor coach, and tour information designed to identify operators' needs and educate them on the range and diversity of destinations, attractions and facilities in Arizona. The publication also includes Resource Guides with Directory Listings for the following categories.

- Accommodations
- Activities & Recreation
- Attractions & Shopping
- Restaurants
- Receptive Services & DMCs
- Transportation

PTPG is distributed by AOT and through AOT's international offices (Canada, France, Germany Japan, Mexico and United Kingdom) at domestic and international trade shows, and at national promotional events. It is also direct-mailed to clients in AOT's database, as well as in response to client inquiries.

AOT's Research Section has been Updated

The following items have been updated in the Research and Statistics section of AOT's business-to-business Web site www.azot.gov.

- [State Park Visitation Third Quarter 2008](#)
- [State Park Visitation October 2008](#)

For additional information or questions, please contact Beth Billings, Research Specialist, at 602-364-3689 or via e-mail at bbillings@azot.gov.

Industry News

State Route 67 to North Rim of Grand Canyon Closed for Season

Arizona State Route 67, leading to the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park, has closed for the season. State Route 67 and all services on the North Rim are expected to re-open for the 2009 season on May 15, 2009. Facilities on the South Rim and in the inner canyon remain open year-round.

The North Rim campground will still be available for winter camping, and is accessible via inner canyon trails from the South Rim or by cross-country skiing and snowshoeing – a 45 mile trip from Jacob Lake. To camp at the North Rim during the winter months, visitors will need a backcountry permit, which can be obtained from the Backcountry Information Center located at the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park. Permit requests can be faxed year-round to (928) 638-2125. Backcountry permits for North Rim winter camping are also available at Pipe Spring National Monument in Fredonia, Arizona, or at the Bureau of Land Management District Office in St. George, Utah; however, you must obtain your permit in person and several days in advance at these locations.

For additional information on winter camping on the North Rim, please call the Backcountry Information Center at (928) 638-7875, between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. MST, weekdays, excluding holidays. For additional information on Grand Canyon National Park, please call (928) 638-7888 or visit the park's web site at www.nps.gov/grca where a copy of the park's Trip Planner can be downloaded.

International Travelers Still Searching for Travel

New research from eMarketer shows that people are still searching online for travel, in many cases above all else, in spite of the credit crunch. According to a recent study, says [ehotelier](#), of the nearly seven million Spaniards who've shopped online in 2008, nearly two-thirds used their time online to search for travel and accommodations. Second-most searched for were tickets to movies, theatres, and concerts, but this had significantly less search at only 36 percent. Another study shows that in the US, the Hispanic population is beginning to go online in big numbers: over 40 percent of US Hispanics shopped online this year. And travel was the top category they researched. As Hispanics look set to represent 1/6 of the US population by 2010, this is not a category to be overlooked, and they continue to be underserved by Spanish-language sites. In the US as a whole, online buyers continue to be "active but practical," with 4/10 online buyers having made an online travel purchase within the past six months. Indeed, travel was the top category in online purchases and transactions among US adult online buyers.

Lower Fuel Costs, Traffic Downturn Mixed Bag for Airlines

Even though U.S. carriers' fuel costs are down, they are cutting capacity to reflect the soft market for leisure and business travel, says the Wall Street Journal. Delta Air Lines pulling back 8 percent to 10 percent of its domestic capacity next year and international seats by 3 percent to 5 percent in sharp contrast to years of expansion; even Southwest Airlines will trim its capacity from 4 percent to 5 percent in January. United Airlines, however doesn't plan any more reductions than the 11 percent for 2008. (*Pages B2, Wall Street Journal; D6, Washington Post;*

3B, *USA Today*; AP; www.ChicagoTribune.com/Business;
www.PhiladelphiaEnquirer.com/Business)

OTTI Offers State Data on Inbound Canadians

The Office of Travel and Tourism Industries has released 2007 state-level data on Canadian visitors to the U.S. based on numbers from Statistics Canada. Among other areas, the estimates on OTTI's web site cover visitor nights, spending, trip purpose and mode of transportation. Last year's data shows that Florida hosted 14 percent of the visitors and accounted for 33 percent of their spending while the top five states were New York, Florida, Washington, Michigan and California. For further information, log on to [Tinet info@ita.doc.gov](mailto:Tinet_info@ita.doc.gov). (*Special to TA*)

N.M. Gov. Richardson is Obama's Pick for Commerce Department

President-elect Barack Obama will nominate New Mexico governor Bill Richardson as Secretary of Commerce, which oversees the Office of Travel and Tourism Industries. Richardson has been a Congressman, U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and Secretary of Energy. (*Pages A30, New York Times*; A6, *Washington Post*; 2A, *USA Today*; A5, *Wall Street Journal*)

Hotels Start Rejecting In-room Minibars

At least two Arizona hotels have shunned room minibars that are going the way of "traditional room keys," says the Arizona Republic. The Hyatt Regency Scottsdale Resort and Spa at Gainey Ranch removed them from 492 rooms in a \$50 million renovation this fall. Empty refrigerators replaced them. The 1,000-room Sheraton Phoenix Downtown Hotel opened in late September without the minibars. And a Marriott resort over the past two years has discussed taking them out. Observers cite the poor sales "of all but a few items," the cost of restocking, the expense of pitching expired items and guests who now bring their own food and drink. (www.ArizonaRepublic.com/Business)

Mood Somber at USTOA Meeting on Outlook

In a survey made at the U.S. Tour Operators Association annual conference and marketplace in Palm Desert, Calif., 80 percent of its members cited the economy as the chief challenge in 2009, Travel Weekly reports. During a panel discussion, chairman Arthur Tauck of Tauck World Discovery stated that "we're experiencing one of most severe downturns." Some 70 percent of the 50 surveyed said tour package sales will be flat or decline next year. On average, the decrease will be 18 percent but many operators were positive on domestic travel. (www.TravelWeekly.com, 12/4)